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Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly, pursuant to its request in resolution 57/260 of 20 December 2002, the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Summary

In paragraph 14 of its resolution 57/260 of 20 December 2002, the General Assembly invited the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to report to it on ongoing work regarding the Convention. The present report has been prepared in response to that invitation.

The report describes the principal activities that have been undertaken within the framework of the Convention in the period since the previous report of the Executive Secretary to the General Assembly. It focuses, in particular, on the contribution of the Convention to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and on the follow-up within the Convention process to the outcome of the Summit as it relates to the Convention. In that regard, the report provides information on the outcome of three important meetings organized in the framework of the Convention since the World Summit, namely, the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in March 2003; the Open-ended Intersessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010, also held in March 2003; and the Meeting on 2010: The Global Biodiversity Challenge, held in May 2003. The report also provides information on cooperation between the Convention and United Nations bodies and other international organizations and conventions, as well as on the status of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 14 of its resolution 57/260 of 20 December 2002, the General Assembly invited the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity[1] to report to it on ongoing work regarding the Convention.

2. Since the submission of the previous report of the Executive Secretary to the General Assembly (A/57/220), the principal activities undertaken under the Convention process have been participation in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002,[2] the organization of the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the Open-ended Intersessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 and the Meeting on 2010: The Global Biodiversity Challenge. Detailed information regarding the outcomes of those meetings is provided in section II of the present report. Section III provides information on cooperation between the Convention and the United Nations bodies and other international organizations and conventions and section IV presents recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly.

3. There have also been various other meetings in the period under review, namely, of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Protected Areas; the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change; the Fourth Workshop on Sustainable Use; the Liaison Group of Technical Experts on the Biosafety Clearing House; the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on the Potential Impacts of Genetic Use Restriction Technologies on Smallholder Farmers, Indigenous and Local Communities and Farmers' Rights; the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Traditional Knowledge and the Clearing-House Mechanism; and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Mountain Biodiversity.

4. The reports of the above-mentioned meetings, together with lists of participants and pre-session documentation, are available on the web site of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (www.biodiv.org).

5. As at 16 June 2003, there were 187 parties to the Convention, 103 parties had signed the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety thereto[3] and 51 had ratified it. In accordance with its article 37, the Protocol will enter into force on 11 September 2003. Following the decision of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the first meeting of the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the parties to the Protocol is scheduled to be held in conjunction with the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004.

II. Principal meetings of the Convention in the period under review

A. Biodiversity at the World Summit on Sustainable Development

1. Contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

6. As a follow-up to the decisions taken at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary provided reports to the General Assembly and to

the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development at its second and third sessions regarding the implementation of the Convention and the contribution of the Convention to the implementation of Agenda 21.[4]

7. At its sixth meeting, held in The Hague from 7 to 19 April 2002, the Conference of the Parties adopted a message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which was transmitted to both the Preparatory Committee at its fourth session, in Bali, Indonesia, and to the World Summit itself. That message was contained in both the Hague Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and decision VI/21, entitled "Annex to the Hague Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity". The latter, incorporating an annex entitled "Contribution of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to the World Summit on Sustainable Development", reviewed the interlinkages between the Convention and Agenda 21 and the experience gained and lessons learned in the implementation of the Convention, and provided ideas and proposals regarding the further implementation of Agenda 21. In addition, the Executive Secretary participated in the preparation of a report on biodiversity in the context of the Secretary-General's Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture, Biodiversity (WEHAB) initiative and participated in the round tables on the initiative organized during the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the basis of the WEHAB framework papers.

2. Outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in relation to the Convention process

8. The World Summit on Sustainable Development was of great significance for the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Secretary-General's WEHAB initiative and the intergovernmental negotiating process raised the profile of biodiversity and cemented the conceptual link between the objectives of the Convention and the attainment of sustainable development and poverty eradication. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development[5] incorporated major elements of the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting with respect to biodiversity.

9. In particular, the World Summit reaffirmed that the Convention on Biological Diversity was the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and underlined the need for new and additional financial and technical resources to facilitate its effective implementation. It also endorsed the commitment of parties at the sixth meeting to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, namely, to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and for the benefit of life on Earth.

10. Among other things, the World Summit highlighted the need to integrate the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity into global, regional and national sectoral and cross-sectoral programmes and policies, in particular the programmes and policies of the economic sectors of countries and international financial institutions. In doing so, the Governments represented at the World

Summit echoed not only the text of the Convention but also one of the main goals of the Strategic Plan adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting. The marginalization of biodiversity concerns has been identified as one of the main constraints to full implementation of the Convention. It is to be hoped that, in view of the outcome of the World Summit, that marginalization will soon become a thing of the past. As the foremost world body dealing with sustainable development and given its intersectoral nature, the Commission on Sustainable Development can do much to help make the mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns a reality.

11. The World Summit also addressed a number of thematic and cross-cutting issues within the Convention process, including forest biological diversity; marine and coastal biodiversity; access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing; the protection of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities; enhancing synergies with relevant multilateral agreements and international trade agreements; the integration of the objectives of the Convention into global, regional and national programmes and policies; and the promotion of practical international support and partnership for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. All three objectives of the Convention have been addressed in a balanced manner. There are significant paragraphs dealing with the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits stemming from the utilization of genetic resources.

12. The World Summit on Sustainable Development has also introduced two significant new items into the international biodiversity agenda that were not contemplated by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting. In its paragraph 44 (o), the Plan of Implementation calls for the negotiation, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, bearing in mind the Bonn Guidelines,[6] an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, and in paragraph 44 (g) the Plan requires action to promote and support initiatives for hot spot areas and other areas essential for biodiversity and to promote the development of national and regional ecological networks and corridors. Although the issues of hot spots, networks and corridors are addressed within the Convention process in some of the thematic programmes of work and cross-cutting issues, the approach contemplated by the World Summit is more holistic. The Convention process will need to address the necessary follow-up action required with regard to those two important issues.

13. In view of the transboundary nature of many sustainable development issues, the Plan of Implementation has not only addressed issues specific to certain regions but has also underlined the need for regional and subregional implementation. In the area of biodiversity, the particular situation of small island developing States and of Africa has received considerable attention. Thus, paragraph 70 (e) calls for measures to support the conservation of Africa's biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. Paragraph 58, addressing issues of small island developing States, calls for effective conservation of natural resources, provision of support for the development and further implementation of components of programmes of work on marine and coastal biological diversity specific to small island developing States, implementation of sustainable fisheries management; and development of community-based sustainable tourism.

B. Open-ended Intersessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

14. The Open-ended Intersessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010, held in Montreal, Canada, from 17 to 20 March 2003, considered the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as it related to the Convention process and made a number of recommendations as regards follow-up action. In general, action is to be pursued within the framework of the Strategic Plan for the Convention and the multi-year programme of work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010. Within the overall framework of the proposed multi-year programme of work of the Conference of the Parties, the Meeting recommended that items identified as priorities by the World Summit, such as poverty alleviation, human health, sustainable communities and livelihoods and hot spots, ecological networks and corridors, should be considered in relation to the existing programmes of work when in-depth reviews of the existing thematic and cross-cutting issues were undertaken. In that regard, the issue of island biodiversity was selected as an item for in-depth review at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In addition, the Meeting recommended that the Conference of the Parties identify, for each upcoming meeting, appropriate ways to address, including within the ministerial segment, issues of overarching importance, in particular the relevant socio-economic issues identified by the World Summit.

15. The proposed multi-year programme of work recommended by the Meeting would considerably streamline and focus the work of the Conference of the Parties. With the exception of island biodiversity, no new issues would be taken up for in-depth consideration. Instead, the focus would be: (a) on reviewing ongoing programmes of work to assess progress and to introduce the necessary adjustments and refinements as appropriate; and (b) on considering progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including the achievement of the 2010 target, and in meeting the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the General Assembly in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2). In order to support implementation, the Conference of the Parties would also, at each of its meetings, seek ways of refining mechanisms to support implementation, such as the financial mechanism, the clearing-house mechanism and capacity-building activities.

16. If approved by the Conference of the Parties, the multi-year programme of work would mark the final stage in the transition from policy-making to implementation that has been evident in recent meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

17. Several of the recommendations adopted by the Meeting were addressed to the Convention's subsidiary bodies, which were requested to review them further and to provide advice to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting on appropriate follow-up action. The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of the specific recommendations of the Meeting on some of the key issues.

1. Hot spots, ecological networks and corridors

18. The Meeting recommended that the issues of hot spots, ecological networks and corridors, arising from the World Summit on Sustainable Development, be

considered by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Protected Areas, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its ninth meeting and the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting in the context of the work on protected areas, taking into account other relevant thematic programmes and cross-cutting issues in the context of national strategies and action plans and focusing on biodiversity loss.

2. International regime on access and benefit-sharing

19. The Meeting underlined the need to incorporate this decision of the World Summit on Sustainable Development into the Convention process. It recommended that the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, which will meet in Montreal, Canada, from 1 to 5 December 2003, should consider the process, nature, scope, elements and modalities of an international regime and provide advice to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting on how it might wish to address the issue.

3. Contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to the Commission on Sustainable Development process

20. The Meeting recognized the importance of close cooperation with the Commission on Sustainable Development and requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention to strengthen such cooperation and to report to the Commission on progress made in the implementation of the Convention, with particular focus on the contribution of implementation of the objectives of the Convention to poverty eradication.

21. The Meeting also requested that, in preparation for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau, should:

(a) Prepare a report on the relevance of the Millennium Development Goals for the programme of work under the Convention and to explore and articulate in each of the programmes of work the links between biodiversity and the Millennium Development Goals in order to identify and highlight ways in which biodiversity conservation and sustainable use can facilitate their achievement;

(b) Identify modalities to ensure that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was consistent with the objectives of the Convention.

4. Global partnership on biodiversity

22. Partnerships and cooperation with relevant international agreements and processes is among the key themes in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The idea of partnership is a familiar one in the Convention process. Cooperation with other organizations, conventions and processes has been an integral part of activities since the Convention was adopted. The programmes of work under the Convention have been developed and are being implemented in close cooperation with a wide range of partners and cooperation with other institutions is a standing item on the agenda of meetings of the Conference of the Parties. The Meeting recommended that, at its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties request the Executive Secretary to develop a global

partnership on biodiversity comprising the major biodiversity-related organizations, with the secretariat of the Convention facilitating the process in order to enhance synergies, avoid duplication of efforts and improve implementation of biodiversity-related agreements.

5. Technology transfer and cooperation

23. The Meeting recalled paragraphs 105 and 106 of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which concern the issue of technology transfer and cooperation, and invited parties and Governments to promote technology transfer in the context of the Convention through "type-2" partnerships, in accordance with the outcome of the World Summit. The issue will be one of the themes for in-depth consideration at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in February 2004.

C. Eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

24. The eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in Montreal, Canada, from 10 to 14 March 2003, made a number of recommendations for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting. The main theme considered was mountain biodiversity. The Subsidiary Body adopted a structure for the proposed programme of work on mountain biodiversity, outlining programme elements and suggested actions (recommendation VIII/1). The Meeting also proposed the establishment of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Mountain Biodiversity and defined its terms of reference. It also recommended the revision and expansion of the indicative list of technologies in the area of the conservation and sustainable use of mountain biological diversity. In that regard, it further recommended the development of a proposal for the consideration of the Subsidiary Body at its ninth meeting on how the role of the clearing-house mechanism could be enhanced so that it could become a central mechanism for exchange of information on technologies relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, access to those technologies, technology development, technical cooperation and transfer of technology.

25. The Subsidiary Body also reviewed and further elaborated upon and refined the programme of work on inland water ecosystems (recommendation VIII/2), identifying gaps and constraints in the implementation of the programme of work that needed to be addressed in order to meet the objectives of the Convention. On the basis of that review, it recommended to the Conference of the Parties the adoption of the revised programme of work contained in the annex to its recommendation. It also recommended that the Conference of the Parties welcome and encourage, in particular, the synergy being developed between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfront Habitat (the "Ramsar Convention") in implementing the work programme, and noted the progress made in the implementation of joint work plans between the two Conventions and encourage further activities aimed at avoiding overlaps in their work.

26. The Subsidiary Body considered a number of issues relating to marine and coastal biological diversity, including the review and further elaboration upon and refinement of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity; marine and coastal protected areas; mariculture; and the conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed genetic resources beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

27. At its eighth meeting, the Subsidiary Body reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity with the aim of assisting in the implementation of the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity at the national, regional and global levels (decision IV/5). The results of the evaluation showed that although progress had been made in the implementation of the programme of work, much still remained to be done to achieve its full implementation and to halt the decline in marine and coastal biological diversity globally. The Subsidiary Body therefore recommended that the Conference of the Parties extend the time period of the programme by an additional six years, at which point its implementation would be re-evaluated (recommendation VIII/3).

28. At its eighth meeting, the Subsidiary Body also considered the issue of marine and coastal protected areas on the basis of the report of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas. The Subsidiary Body made a number of recommendations on the issue for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, including: (a) the recognition that marine and coastal protected areas were an essential element in the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and that their establishment, where they were within areas under national jurisdiction, should be in accordance with national legislation and in accordance with international law where they were in areas beyond national jurisdiction; (b) the adoption of the approach outlined in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development regarding the conservation and management of the oceans, including the target date of 2012 for the establishment of a representative network of marine protected areas consistent with international law; (c) agreement that such a network would include both areas where extractive uses were excluded and other marine and coastal protected areas where threats were managed and extractive uses might be allowed; (d) recognition that marine and coastal protected areas should be part of a wider integrated marine and coastal area management framework and urging parties and Governments to establish as a matter of priority an effective marine and coastal biodiversity management framework covering all areas subject to national jurisdiction, including the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf and deep-sea basins; (e) recognition of the urgent need to establish in areas beyond national jurisdiction further marine and coastal protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including in relation to areas of seamounts, hydrothermal vents, cold-water corals and open ocean; (f) requesting the Executive Secretary to work with other international organizations, in particular the Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat, the International Seabed Authority and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), regional seas conventions and action plans, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), regional fisheries organizations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to identify appropriate mechanisms for the establishment and effective management of marine and coastal protected areas beyond national

jurisdiction and to report his findings to the Conference of the Parties; and urging parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations to provide active financial, technical and other support for the establishment of a global system of networks of marine and coastal protected areas. The meeting also identified a number of research priorities and pilot projects and recommended their incorporation into the programme of work and the identification of partners to undertake relevant activities.

29. On the topic of mariculture, the Subsidiary Body endorsed activities to be undertaken and best practices to be followed in order to avoid the adverse effects of mariculture on marine and coastal biodiversity and to enhance its positive effects, as identified by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Mariculture. Research priorities for the future were also endorsed by Subsidiary Body.

30. At its eighth meeting, the Subsidiary Body considered the issue of the conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction on the basis of a joint study prepared by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat on the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea[7] with a view to enabling the Subsidiary Body to address the scientific, technical and technological issues relating to bioprospecting of genetic resources on the deep seabed. It should be noted that in parallel, the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly of 1 November 1996 (A/51/645, para. 231) underlined the need for the rational and orderly development of activities relating to the utilization of genetic resources derived from the deep seabed area beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

31. The study reviews the provisions of the two Conventions as they relate to the conservation and sustainable use of the genetic resources of the deep seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. It notes the complementary nature of the provisions of the two Conventions with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity. The study concludes, however, that whereas the provisions of the two Conventions are complementary and mutually supportive regarding the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, an important legal lacuna exists with respect to commercially oriented activities relating to marine genetic resources in the deep seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. That lacuna will need to be dealt with by the international community, given the increasing importance of the genetic resources in those areas and the threat posed to them by various activities that may be carried out without due regard for conservation and equity imperatives. The two Conventions contain useful principles, concepts, measures and mechanisms that could provide the building blocks for a specific legal regime for marine genetic resources in the deep seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

32. The discussions regarding the issue in the Subsidiary Body underlined the need both for more information regarding the status of and trends in deep seabed genetic resources beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and for cooperation between States and among relevant international organizations. Consequently, the Subsidiary Body recommended that the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting: (a) request the Executive Secretary, in consultation with parties and Governments and in collaboration with relevant international entities, such as the Division for

Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Seabed Authority and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, to compile and review information on the status of and trends in deep seabed genetic resources and on methods to identify, assess and monitor such resources, including threats thereto and the means for their protection; (b) invite the General Assembly to call upon relevant international entities such as UNEP, IMO, the International Seabed Authority, IOC, the International Hydrographic Organization, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat to review issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources of the deep seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and to make recommendations to the Assembly regarding appropriate action; and (c) invite parties and other States to identify activities and processes under their jurisdiction or control that might have a significant adverse impact on deep seabed ecosystems and species beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, in order to comply with article 3 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

33. The Subsidiary Body also considered issues relating to the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands and to biological diversity and tourism. As regards the former, the Subsidiary Body recommended, inter alia, that the Conference of the Parties adopt a process for the periodic review of the status and trends of biological diversity in dry and sub-humid lands, taking into account national laws, policies and programmes and recognizing the urgency for action in those countries severely affected by land degradation, focusing on strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to conduct assessments at the national level and build on the knowledge and structures of ongoing global assessments, as well as national assessments (recommendation VIII/4). The Subsidiary Body further recommended that the Conference of the Parties requests the Executive Secretary, in consultation with parties, to develop targets for the implementation of the programme of work, taking into account especially national action programmes to combat desertification, the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, the Global Taxonomy Initiative, the Strategic Plan for the Convention, as well as the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, for the consideration of the Subsidiary Body.

34. With respect to biological diversity and tourism, the Subsidiary Body endorsed a set of draft guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development and biological diversity and recommended their adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting (recommendation VIII/5). It further recommended that the Conference of the Parties, recognizing that sustainable tourism can provide significant benefits to biodiversity conservation, notes that the guidelines are voluntary and represent a range of opportunities for local, regional and national governments, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders to manage tourism activities in an ecological, economic and socially sustainable manner. In addition, the Subsidiary Body called upon the Conference of the Parties to invite the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, regional development banks and other relevant international organizations: (a) to take the guidelines into account in undertaking their activities; and (b) to provide technical and financial assistance in

the implementation of the guidelines and to pay due regard to them when preparing, approving and funding tourism development projects having potential implications for biological diversity.

35. Finally, the Subsidiary Body made a number of recommendations concerning the multi-year programme of work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 (recommendation VIII/7). Firstly, it recommended that the Strategic Plan and its target of 2010 for significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss should guide the implementation of the multi-year programme of work. Secondly, it decided that, in view of the current heavy workload of the Convention, the addition of new items for in-depth consideration was not desirable until after 2010, with the exception of in-depth consideration of island biodiversity. Thirdly, it recommended that the focus should be on implementation of the programmes of work by parties, of corresponding top national priorities as set forth in national biodiversity strategies and of action plans. Lastly, it recommended that at each of its meetings until 2010 the Conference of the Parties, including its ministerial segment, should assess, as a specific agenda item, the state of progress in achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan and progress in achieving its 2010 target.

36. The recommendations of the Subsidiary Body at its eighth meeting provide evidence that programmes of work are being refined and tools and mechanisms developed to achieve the 2010 target. There is also increasing recognition that enhanced capacity and financial resources, as well as enabling activities, will be needed if the goals of the Strategic Plan and the 2010 target are to be achieved.

D. Meeting on 2010: The Global Biodiversity Challenge

37. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in partnership with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of UNEP and UNDP and with financial support from the Governments of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, convened an international Meeting on 2010: The Global Biodiversity Challenge to articulate a framework for action to address the internationally agreed target of reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss by the year 2010. The Meeting, held in London from 21 to 23 May 2003, brought together over 150 participants, including government-nominated experts and representatives of biodiversity-related conventions, United Nations entities, academic and research institutions, industry and the business sector, local and indigenous communities and international and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.

38. The Meeting was held pursuant to decision VI/26 adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting, in April 2002. In its decision VI/26, the Conference of the Parties adopted the Strategic Plan for the Convention, which commits parties to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, and to achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels. That target was endorsed in the Hague Ministerial Declaration and by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in its Plan of Implementation.

39. The specific objectives of the meeting were:

(a) To review approaches for understanding and measuring biodiversity loss;

(b) To review the 2010 target in the context of other biodiversity-related targets;

(c) To identify key initiatives in addressing biodiversity loss (such as multilateral environmental agreements) and how they relate to the 2010 target;

(d) To review and agree on the most appropriate approaches to reporting on progress.

40. The Meeting was also part of the ongoing efforts of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other partners that focus specifically on integrating biodiversity issues into initiatives aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals.[b] Such initiatives acknowledge the Convention on Biological Diversity as an appropriate framework for further development of the priority activities required to promote the integration of biodiversity in international and local efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It was anticipated that the outcome of the Meeting and the associated follow-up work would further enhance wider recognition of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services in poverty alleviation in the context of sustainable development.

41. The Meeting noted that, while the international community had agreed that biodiversity loss constituted a serious challenge at the global, regional and national levels, there was as yet no commonly agreed set of parameters that could be used to measure either how much biodiversity was available or how much was being lost. Currently there were many different assessments and measurements being undertaken by a wide range of local, national, regional and global institutions. However, those assessments tended to focus on specific components of biodiversity with limited coordination or interlinkages and consequently there were many duplications as well as many gaps. In recognition of that concern, the discussions at the meeting highlighted the need to develop appropriate approaches in order to improve the ability of key players at various levels to measure and report on both the status of biodiversity and its rate of loss, with a view to assessing progress towards the 2010 target.

42. The Meeting further noted that, in addition to the 2010 target, the international community had agreed to a wide range of other relevant targets and in some cases targets that were specific to biodiversity. Those included the 16 outcome-oriented targets of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Millennium Development Goals, the targets in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the marine conservation targets of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the WWF/World Bank Forest Alliance targets. The Meeting therefore considered the relationships between those targets in terms of developing approaches in order to maximize synergies, reduce overlaps and duplication and harmonize reporting on the various ongoing initiatives that addressed those issues and concerns in a way that would facilitate compilation of an accurate picture of progress in achieving the internationally agreed targets.

43. In addition, consideration was also given to the range of initiatives, international agreements and programmes, other biodiversity-related conventions and regional and national strategies and action plans and how the existing respective reporting measures on "pressures" on biodiversity, such as human population growth, settlement patterns, resource consumption and waste production, could be used to interpret the achievements of those initiatives in reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss.

44. The need to provide objective and quantitative data and information, aggregated at appropriate levels, on the rate of biodiversity loss was highlighted as a critical component of national and global efforts to achieve the 2010 target. The Meeting also deliberated on the potential for incorporating the required data into the existing reporting frameworks and mechanisms, including but not limited to the national reporting processes of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity-related conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism, the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and *Global Environment Outlook* report series, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessments, the Millennium Project on Millennium Development Goals, the Global Biodiversity Information Framework and Earth Trends.

45. The Meeting made a number of recommendations for further review and consideration by the Convention on Biological Diversity and other key partners at the national, regional and international levels. While those recommendations were general in scope, they were nonetheless sufficiently flexible to permit wider interpretation of the possible range of implications for national-level consideration and potential follow-up action. One of the key recommendations concerned linkages between biodiversity and poverty reduction and the need to incorporate biodiversity targets into other strategies, sector policies, national strategies and action plans, regional and global development initiatives and the private and business sector. A practical approach to facing that challenge was to include the 2010 biodiversity target as an indicator for the Millennium Development Goals, in particular poverty alleviation, and other international goals and targets, including trade and the wider development agenda.

46. The Meeting also emphasized the need to "make the case" for biodiversity by developing a coherent strategy for effective communication of the impact of biodiversity loss and the efforts required to achieve the 2010 target. The biodiversity community had not yet made the case that failing to meet the target would have significant implications for ecosystem goods and services and for the economic and social well-being of people. Although the case had been made for some "flagship" species in terms of their intrinsic value, the wider implications in relation to socio-economic development were still poorly understood and even more poorly communicated. It was important therefore that proposals for a communication strategy address the need to demonstrate the economic and ecological consequences of the current rate of biodiversity loss, the development of different options with well-articulated cost and impact statements, as well as incorporating linkages with other relevant targets of the World Summit for Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, it was underlined that the experience of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change would serve as a useful model to guide that approach. In addition, the communication strategy should be designed to improve coherence between national and international reporting, to present clear policy-relevant and scientifically credible messages on trends in biodiversity and mesh with relevant targets of the World Summit, the Millennium Development Goals and other international targets.

47. The Meeting further suggested that a small set of indicators covering multiple targets relating to biodiversity and development would be useful in assessing progress towards the 2010 target and more specifically in illustrating status and trends in biodiversity loss, the underlying drivers of loss as well as activities undertaken to address the rate of loss. Such indicators should be relevant to national

context and their development should be based on the ongoing work of the Convention on Biological Diversity Liaison Group on Indicators, which is currently developing guidance for national indicators for the Subsidiary Body at its ninth meeting. It was also recommended that aggregated indicators, wherever available at different levels of biodiversity, should be used as a communication tool for policy makers. Investment in the development of a single biodiversity index should not be contemplated, as it was not achievable before the 2010 target.

48. Related to the above recommendation on indicators, the Meeting called for greater access and availability of up-to-date biodiversity data for monitoring progress towards the 2010 target in line with best practices of knowledge management. In addition, support for the development of appropriate tools, standards and protocols for data exchange would be a critical element of the overall monitoring process. Equally important would be the establishment of interoperable databases as well as the initiation of activities aimed at improving awareness about the existence and importance of biodiversity data, for example, by developing examples of mobilization of biodiversity data for practical uses and decision-making (i.e. building prediction models of the impact of climate change on biodiversity, of alien invasive species, of the spread of diseases, of planning of protected areas and so on). The identification of significant gaps in the available biodiversity data and the need to establish clear plans for filling those gaps was recognized as a particularly significant component of the "data realm".

49. With regard to the priority for articulating the interdependence between biodiversity and development targets, the Meeting called on the Convention on Biological Diversity, other multilateral environmental agreements and international initiatives to establish specific targets and sub-targets in relevant ongoing and planned programmes in support of the 2010 goal. The Meeting stressed the need to agree on a process of adapting international targets, including the 2010 target, to national situations and the use of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, as well as national mechanisms for monitoring and compliance, as appropriate frameworks for implementing those targets at the national level. It was also recommended that the process used in the development of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation should guide the review of the thematic programmes of the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to set specific sub-targets, milestones and time-lines in support of achieving the 2010 target. To the extent possible, the sub-targets should be systematic, measurable, realistic and time-bound. In addition, participants called on Governments to actively promote the role of biodiversity in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and recommended that goal 7 — achieving environmental sustainability — become a guiding principle for achieving all the other Millennium Development Goals.

50. With regard to the issue of resources, the Meeting recommended a significant increase in the quantity, efficiency and effectiveness of funding available for activities aimed at meeting the 2010 target. That increase could be achieved through the adoption of innovative approaches, including making more effective use of existing funds in the environmental and other budget allocations, such as poverty reduction strategies; development of partnerships with private sector and non-governmental sources; ensuring that spending in other areas supported biodiversity targets; and increasing funding directed specifically at biodiversity targets through a range of mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), official development assistance, international finance institutions and regional and bilateral

arrangements. The establishment of national-level targets in the context of the 2010 target and reporting on progress in meeting that target should be an incentive for funding and investment. The Meeting also called for the creation of conditions that encouraged the use of market forces to help meet the biodiversity targets.

51. The Meeting recommended that, at the national level, primary responsibility for reporting on progress towards the 2010 target should be vested in the Convention on Biological Diversity national focal points, supported by a national committee and/or task force involving relevant government departments, civil society, academia and relevant research organizations in order to ensure proper cross-sectoral involvement. It was also recommended that reporting should be underpinned by a sound scientific approach to allow for comparability over time. In addition, reporting should be aligned with the Millennium Development Goals and other relevant reporting mechanisms. The Meeting stressed the need to strengthen the national reporting process, in particular in developing countries, and that GEF in particular should be approached to provide the necessary capacity-building support.

52. The national reporting process and its outputs, together with the available relevant national-, regional- and global-level data sets and indicators, would then be incorporated into the preparation of the global report on progress towards the 2010 target. The global report would be prepared, under commission from the Convention on Biological Diversity, by an independent body working in collaboration or partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including all international biodiversity-related conventions and programmes, national institutions and non-governmental organizations, and would be subjected to peer review by an independent scientific panel and/or multi-stakeholder group. With regard to the frequency of reporting, the Meeting recommended that national-level analysis and reporting take place every two years and be linked to the ongoing reporting obligations under the Convention. At the international level, global trend analyses and reporting should be carried out on a four- to five-year cycle. One recommendation, which merits special mention, concerned the need for all parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to include in their third national reports their experience in setting their own national targets and baselines for meeting the 2010 target with clearly defined sub-targets and milestones. In addition, the format for the third national reports should incorporate specific questions on the broad range of activities undertaken by all relevant sectors of government and civil society to achieve the 2010 target.

53. With regard to the issue of coordination, there was general agreement that an overall coordinating mechanism or unit should be established in the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Meeting stressed, however, that the coordination process at the global level should be led by but not centre on the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was also recommended that, in view of the existing challenges posed by lack of effective coordination mechanisms at the national level, efforts should be made to promote the establishment of partnerships and synergies among relevant environmental and developmental agencies and wherever possible to encourage mainstreaming the agreed targets between programmes and departments at the national and lower levels. Capacity-building to achieve and monitor progress towards the 2010 target must be integrated into those levels with direct linkages to similar efforts at the international level.

54. The results of the Meeting, including the above recommendations, will be submitted for consideration to the Subsidiary Body at its ninth meeting, in November 2003, and to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, in February 2004. It is anticipated that the governing bodies of a range of other international biodiversity-related conventions and programmes will also consider the results of the Meeting.

E. Cooperation with the Global Environment Facility

55. Pursuant to the memorandum of understanding between the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EEF Council, the Convention secretariat continued to communicate, cooperate and consult with the secretariat of GEF to enhance the effectiveness of the financial mechanism in assisting developing country parties to implement the Convention. The secretariat attended the 19th, 20th and 21st meetings of the GEF Council as well as the second session of the GEF Assembly in order to provide the GEF governing bodies with updated information on the Convention. The Convention secretariat developed a searchable database of GEF Council decisions and an electronic handbook of the financial mechanism, which are available on its web site (www.biodiv.org). The two secretariats recently met to discuss how to implement more effectively the guidance from the Conference of the Parties and decided to hold regular meetings to maintain their dialogue.

III. Cooperation with relevant United Nations bodies, international organizations and conventions

56. In its decision VI/20, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity re-emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation with other organizations, initiatives and conventions. The emphasis placed on cooperation and collaborative activities underlines the conviction of parties that the objectives of the Convention can only be reached through enhanced policy coordination between all relevant international instruments and processes.

57. At its previous meetings, the Conference of the Parties had requested the Executive Secretary to collaborate with a number of conventions and international organizations, including, inter alia, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[9] the Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (the "Convention to Combat Desertification"),[10] the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the International Plant Protection Convention, the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

58. During the period under review, a number of cooperative activities have been undertaken with United Nations bodies, relevant international organizations and other conventions and processes.

59. As regards cooperation with United Nations bodies, enhanced collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Development has been a central component of the Convention's efforts. The Open-ended Intersessional Meeting on the Multi-year

Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 (see paras. 14-23 above) considered the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as it related to the Convention process and recognized the importance of close cooperation with the Commission on Sustainable Development to ensure mutual supportiveness within the respective programmes of work so that the work of the Convention contributed fully to the efforts of the international community to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication. In that respect, the Meeting requested the Executive Secretary to strengthen cooperation with the Commission on Sustainable Development and to report on progress made in the implementation of the Convention, with particular focus on the contribution of the objectives of the Convention to poverty eradication. Pursuant to that request, the Executive Secretary submitted a report entitled "Contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to implementing the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit" to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session, held in New York from 28 April to 9 May 2003.[11]

60. The Executive Secretary and the Head of the United Nations Forum on Forests held a meeting in Montreal, Canada, in January 2003, with a view to identifying ways and means to increase coordination between the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Forum on Forests, and support from the Convention in the work of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity also participated in the second meeting of the Task Force on Streamlining Forest-Related Reporting of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, held in February 2003.

61. In its decision VI/22, the Conference of the Parties welcomed the report of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change, held in Helsinki from 21 to 25 January 2002; welcomed the establishment of the Liaison Group of the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and encouraged the activities of the Group in promoting complementarity and synergies in their activities on forests and forest ecosystems. In March 2003, the secretariat held discussions with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification during the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on their joint Liaison Group and a meeting of core team members of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change was organized in January 2003. A meeting of the joint Liaison Group was held in Bonn, Germany, on 19 May 2003. In July 2003, the secretariat, the Chair of the Subsidiary Body and several Convention on Biological Diversity national focal points participated in a workshop to examine synergies among the three Conventions, organized by the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The workshop examined, inter alia, the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change and highlighted the use of the ecosystem approach as a framework for activities contributing to the objectives of the three Conventions.

62. A meeting with the secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention, held in Montreal, Canada, on 24 and 25 February 2003, identified areas of possible joint activity in order to promote synergies between the International Plant Protection Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In view of the common areas of concern, including

invasive alien species, living modified organisms and biosecurity, a draft memorandum of cooperation has been prepared.

63. As requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision VI/20, the Executive Secretary applied for observer status with the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade of the World Trade Organization and renewed a similar request for the Council for the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Council). The Executive Secretary participated in briefing sessions on multilateral environmental agreements organized by the Committee on Trade and Environment of the World Trade Organization and in regular sessions of that Committee, with which the secretariat enjoys observer status. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity also participated in some of the meetings of the Committee on Trade and Environment's special sessions on the Doha mandate of the World Trade Organization, on the basis of ad hoc invitations. In a special session focusing on cooperation between multilateral environmental agreements and the World Trade Organization, the Executive Secretary made specific proposals that would provide a framework for cooperation between the Convention and the organization. In addition, the Executive Secretary met informally with members of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures to brief them on the status of and preparations for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and on the Convention on Biological Diversity work programme on alien invasive species. The Executive Secretary also met with the executive secretaries and the chairpersons of relevant bodies of the World Trade Organization, namely, the Committee on Agriculture, the TRIPS Council, the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade, as well as the Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization, to discuss issues of mutual concern. Further to a request by the Chairman of the TRIPS Council, the secretariat prepared a briefing note for that Council on activities of the Convention on Biological Diversity of relevance to the review of article 27, paragraph 3 (b), of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Agreement and the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore.

64. Pursuant to the request of the Conference of the Parties in paragraph 36 of its decision VI/6, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the secretariat and WIPO in June 2002. The secretariat continued to attend meetings of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore and to contribute to the documentation, as appropriate. Similarly, WIPO provides information in support of and participates in Convention on Biological Diversity meetings as needed.

65. A memorandum of cooperation was signed with FAO to cover the overall relationship between the two organizations applicable to a number of programmes of work, including the cooperation with the secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture acting as the Interim Committee for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the cooperation with the International Plant Protection Convention, in particular on biosafety and invasive alien species, and the secondment of an official to the secretariat. FAO has increased collaboration in all initiatives and programmes of work in the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, has responded positively to the invitation by the Conference of the Parties to lead some initiatives

such as the International Pollinator Initiative and the International Initiative on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity and plays particular roles such as chairing the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

66. In its decision VI/19, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to consult with UNESCO, UNEP, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and experts, as well as any other relevant institutions to, among other things, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Global Initiative on Communication, Educational and Public Awareness, specifically on the start-up phase of the programme of work contained in the annex to the decision. In response to decision VI/19, the secretariat established a Consultative Working Group of Experts on Communication, Educational and Public Awareness, consisting of representatives of UNESCO and other relevant organizations, to update the group on progress in the implementation of the programme of work in that area, specifically on the draft implementation strategy, and also to incorporate the advice of the experts and other partners on planned activities as outlined in the first phase of the Global Initiative on Communication, Educational and Public Awareness.

67. In addition, the secretariat established a working web site or electronic forum for the Communication, Educational and Public Awareness Consultative Group of Experts (including UNESCO) to facilitate a two-way consultative process, foster regular communication and provide feedback to the secretariat, share experience and expertise and also engage in discussions of relevance to communication, educational and public awareness. The consultation process is ongoing and the outputs generated will be instrumental in enhancing the efforts of the secretariat in the regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Global Initiative. Those outputs, including the contributions of UNESCO and other partners and experts, will be part of the report to be submitted for consideration to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting.

68. In its decision VI/6, the Conference of the Parties decided to establish and maintain cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture acting as the Interim Committee for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and, upon the entry into force of the Treaty, with the Governing Body; requested the Executive Secretary to develop cooperation with the secretariat of the Commission and, upon its establishment, with the secretariat of the International Treaty; and further requested the Executive Secretary to convey that decision to the Commission. Pursuant to decision VI/6, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the two institutions.

69. In its decision VI/5, the Conference of the Parties invited the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore and other relevant bodies to examine in the context of their work the specific intellectual property implications of genetic use restriction technologies, in particular with respect to indigenous and local communities. In response to that request, the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants submitted to the Executive Secretary on 11 April 2003 a memorandum, adopted by the Council of the International Union, communicating its position concerning decision VI/5 of the Conference of the Parties on potential impacts of genetic use restriction technologies.

70. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity also enhanced its cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD Working Group on Economic Aspects of Biodiversity is a major partner in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity programme of work on incentive measures. Both at meetings of the group and during intersessional periods, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity provided guidance and input on activities of the group of relevance to the implementation of the programme of work on incentive measures. The Second Convention on Biological Diversity Workshop on Incentive Measures, held in Montreal, Canada, from 3 to 5 June 2003, in order to develop proposals for the application of ways and means to remove or mitigate perverse incentives profited from the participation of a representative of OECD and thus the knowledge and expertise of OECD in the field.

71. The secretariat convened a Liaison Group meeting, held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 10 to 12 October 2002, and a series of international stakeholder consultations in order to further develop and implement the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, including its 16 targets, in accordance with decision VI/9. Pursuant to paragraphs 14 (b) and 19 of the annex to decision VI/9, those activities have been carried out with the active collaboration of a number of initiatives and organizations and a wide range of actors in addition to the parties to the Convention, including Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, FAO, the Global Invasive Species Programme, the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, IUCN, the Millennium Seed Bank, Plantlife International, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, United Kingdom, the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre and WWF. In collaboration with Botanic Gardens Conservation International and in partnership with the HSBC Bank, the secretariat organized a meeting of experts on investing in nature, held in Dingle, Kerry County, Ireland, from 5 to 7 October 2003, to prepare advice on development of national targets, of sub-targets and milestones for each target and of baseline data and indicators to monitor progress towards achieving the targets by 2010, development of regional components, establishment of a flexible coordination mechanism and ways and means, within the framework of the Convention's thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work, of promoting implementation of the global strategy for plant conservation and of monitoring and assessing progress.

72. In accordance with decisions V/19 and VI/20, the secretariat participated in a project on harmonizing the reporting requirements of the biodiversity-related conventions, namely the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Ramsar Convention and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the "World Heritage Convention"), and continued to develop joint work programmes to implement a more harmonious system of reporting. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora participated in a number of meetings organized by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and thus contributed to the preparation of practical principles, operational guidelines and associated instruments for the sustainable use of biodiversity for the Fourth Workshop on Sustainable Use, held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 May 2003, and the consideration of ways to achieve the target of significantly reducing the rate of loss

of biodiversity by 2010 for the Meeting on 2010: The Global Biodiversity Challenge, held in London from 21 to 23 May 2003. The secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora has also been invited to participate in the liaison group on non-timber forest resources, including in particular bushmeat. Ways to integrate migratory species into national biodiversity strategies and action plans are currently being discussed with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. The implementation of the third joint work plan (2002-2006) of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention continued, with activities on the joint River Basin Initiative, on the convergence of the criteria and classification of inland water ecosystems between the Conventions, on the valuation of inland water ecosystems, as well as on biodiversity indicators and impact assessment. A memorandum of cooperation is being discussed with the World Heritage Convention with a view of strengthening the collaboration on protected areas.

73. A memorandum of cooperation was signed on 20 February 2002 between the secretariat and Botanic Gardens Conservation International to assist in the coordination of and support for the development and implementation of decision VI/9 of the Conference of the Parties on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. A staff member seconded to the secretariat and based in Nairobi took up his post on 1 August 2003 for an initial period of one year, which may be extended for an additional year.

74. In line with a memorandum of understanding with the Institut de l'Énergie et de l'Environnement de la Francophonie, the secretariat participated in the consultation on synergies among national focal points of the three multilateral environmental agreements from French-speaking African countries, organized by the Institut de l'Énergie et de l'Environnement de la Francophonie under the auspices of the Ministry of Land, Water and Environment of Morocco.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

75. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly may wish, inter alia:

(a) To take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session;

(b) To note the contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the conclusions of the World Summit as regards the role of the Convention in achieving sustainable development;

(c) To recall the commitment to negotiate, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, bearing in mind the Bonn Guidelines, an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, and to reiterate its invitation to the Conference of the Parties to take appropriate steps in that regard;

(d) To note the outcome of the Open-ended Intersessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010, held in Montreal, Canada, from 17 to 20 March 2003, as well as the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in Montreal, Canada, from 10 to 14 March 2003;

(e) To note also the outcome of the Meeting on 2010: The Global Biodiversity Challenge, held in London from 21 to 23 May 2003;

(f) To welcome the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and further urge parties to the Convention that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Protocol to do so as soon as possible;

(g) To invite the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to continue reporting to the General Assembly on ongoing work regarding the Convention.

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[2] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum).

[3] See UNEP/CBD/ExCOP/1/3 and Corr.1, part two, annex.

[4] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[5] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development* ..., chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[6] Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of their Utilization (decision VI/24 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity).

[7] See *The Law of the Sea: Official Texts of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 and of the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 with Index and Excerpts from the Final Act of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.V.10).

[8] The Meeting on Biodiversity After Johannesburg: The Critical Role of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, held in London in March 2003, was part of those efforts and provided direct input to the Meeting on 2010: The Global Biodiversity Challenge, held in London from 21 to 23 May 2003.

[9] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[10] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[11] E/CN.17/2003/BP.2.